Archie COMICS
3
OF FOUR
ARCHIE IS
MR. JUSTICE™
PORTER • SANAPO • WHITMORE • MORELLI

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE™

THE STORY SO FAR...

When Archie Andrews decided to use his newfound super-human abilities to bring justice to his greed-stricken hometown, he also learned that righting those wrongs can be dangerous. Now more than ever, Archie is determined to keep his closest friends and family out of harm's way. Because of this, only his best friend Jughead knows of his secret identity. But the charade can only last so long, and Archie's about to learn that he can't continue to carry the weight of the world on his own...

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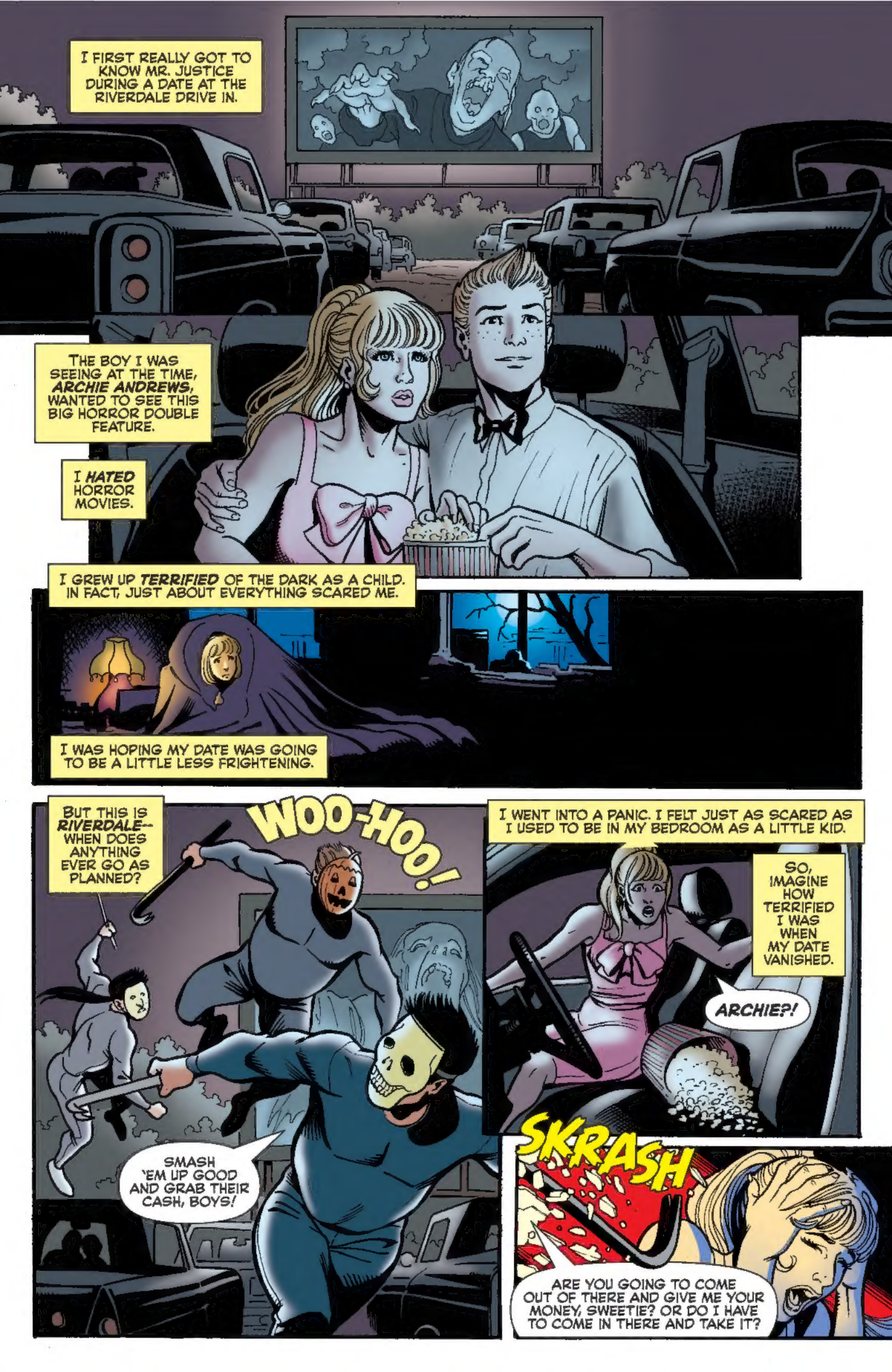
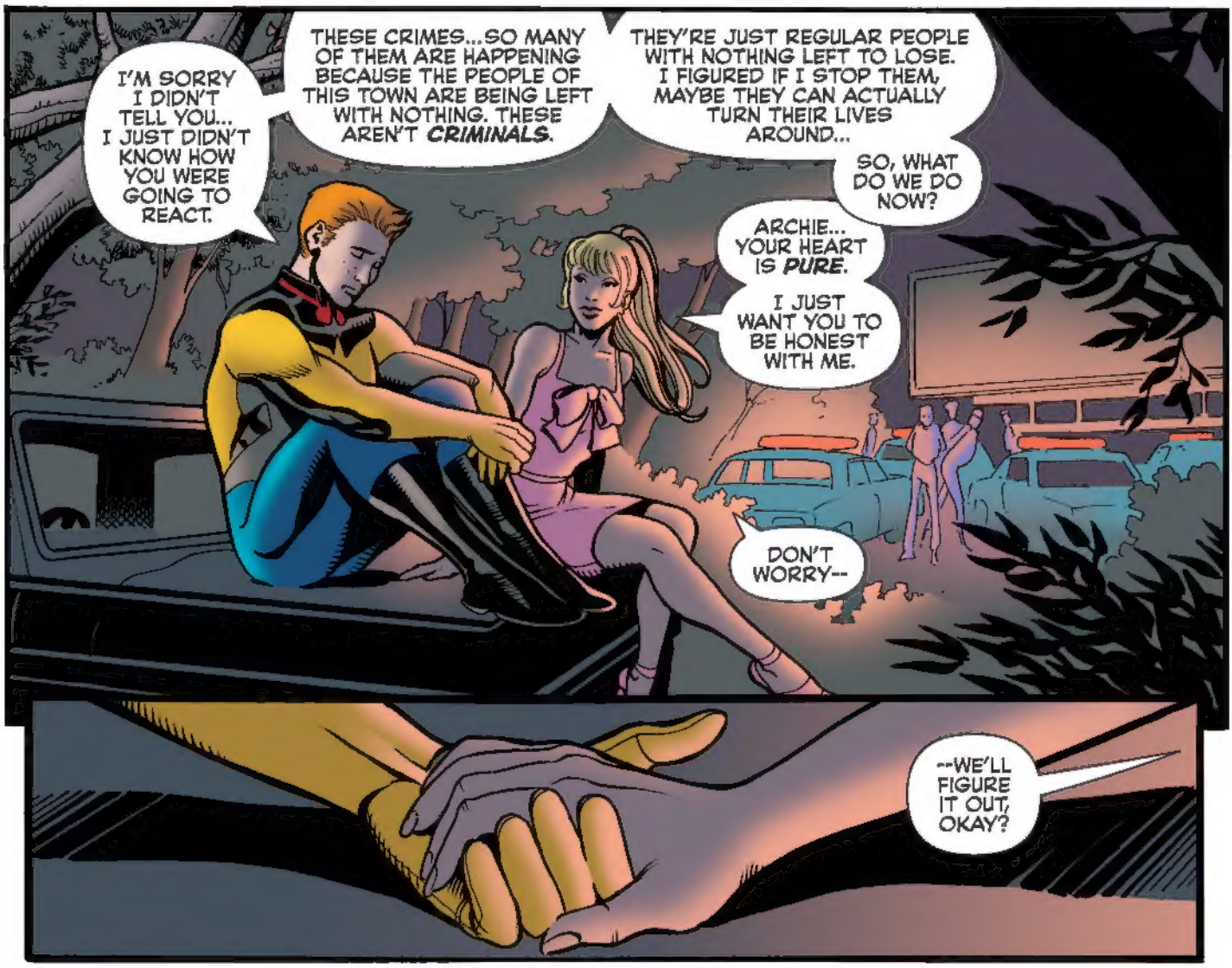
PICKENS PARK, RIVERDALE-- TODAY.
THANKS FOR MEETING ME OUT HERE, HARPER--I'VE BEEN SO BUSY LATELY I WASN'T SURE I COULD MAKE IT ACROSS TOWN.
ARE YOU KIDDING ME? THERE WAS NO WAY I WAS GOING TO MISS OUT ON GETTING YOUR STORY.
YOU'VE BEEN THERE FOR SOME OF MR. JUSTICE'S BIGGEST MOMENTS. I DON'T THINK THERE'S A BETTER EXPERT IN THE WHOLE WORLD FOR THIS PIECE.
THANKS...I THINK. I JUST WANT TO TRY AND HELP SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT. AR--MR. JUSTICE DESERVES THAT MUCH.
OF COURSE. WHATEVER YOU NEED, I'M HERE FOR YOU, BETTY. JUST START WHEN YOU'RE READY.
THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF MISINFORMATION OUT THERE...ESPECIALLY FROM THE GAZETTE AND, ONCE UPON A TIME, FROM HIRAM LODGE.
SOME PEOPLE PAINT HIM AS HERO, SOME PEOPLE PAINT HIM AS A MENACE, BUT I'M HERE TO TALK ABOUT THE PERSON THAT I KNEW--

RIVERDALE--THEN.
--I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE REAL
MR. JUSTICE!
WHEN HE FIRST SHOWED UP, PEOPLE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK.
HERE WAS THIS PERSON, WHO WAS AROUND MY AGE, AND HE HAD THESE INCREDIBLE POWERS.
BUT IT WAS THE FACT THAT HE WAS WILLING TO HELP WHEN RIVERDALE NEEDED IT MOST... THAT'S WHAT SET HIM APART.
AND IT WASN'T JUST WITH FANCY SLOGANS OR POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. HE CARED ABOUT US, THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN RIVERDALE.


I FIRST REALLY GOT TO KNOW MR. JUSTICE DURING A DATE AT THE RIVERDALE DRIVE IN.
THE BOY I WAS SEEING AT THE TIME, ARCHIE ANDREWS, WANTED TO SEE THIS BIG HORROR DOUBLE FEATURE.
I HATED HORROR MOVIES.
I GREW UP TERRIFIED OF THE DARK AS A CHILD. IN FACT, JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING SCARED ME.
I WAS HOPING MY DATE WAS GOING TO BE A LITTLE LESS FRIGHTENING.
BUT THIS IS RIVERDALE--- WHEN DOES ANYTHING EVER GO AS PLANNED?
WOO-HOO!
SMASH 'EM UP GOOD AND GRAB THEIR CASH, BOYS!
I WENT INTO A PANIC. I FELT JUST AS SCARED AS I USED TO BE IN MY BEDROOM AS A LITTLE KID.
SO, IMAGINE HOW TERRIFIED I WAS WHEN MY DATE VANISHED.
ARCHIE?!
SKRASH
ARE YOU GOING TO COME OUT OF THERE AND GIVE ME YOUR MONEY, SWEETIE? OR DO I HAVE TO COME IN THERE AND TAKE IT?

HE ***SAVED*** ME. WITH ALL THE CHAOS GOING ON, ***I*** WAS THE ONE MR. JUSTICE REACHED OUT TO AND HELPED FIRST.

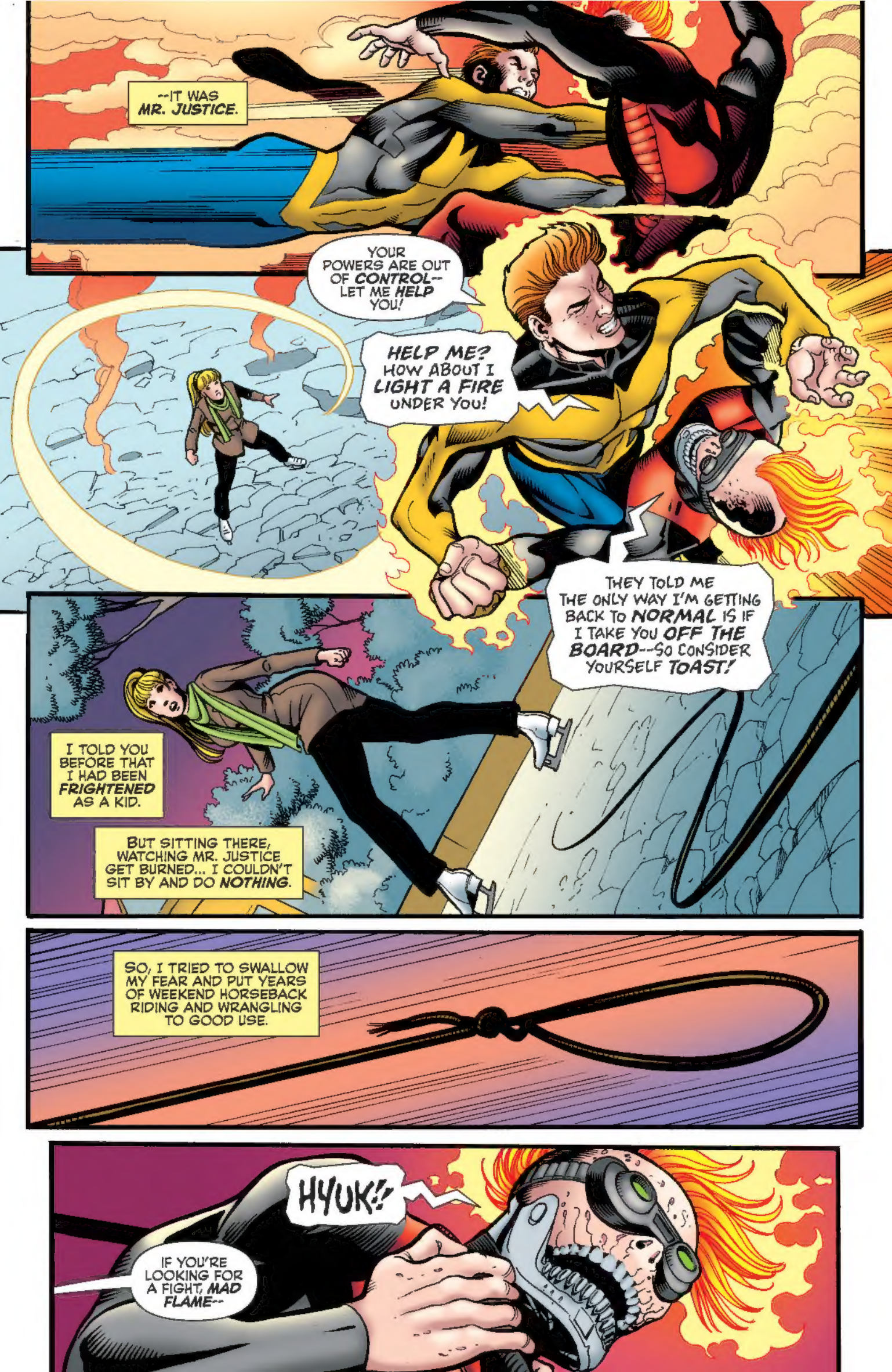
THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD EVER SEEN MR. JUSTICE UP CLOSE. AND WE FORMED A QUICK BOND...I FELT LIKE I ALREADY KNEW HIM.


I'M SORRY I DIDN'T TELL YOU... I JUST DIDN'T KNOW HOW YOU WERE GOING TO REACT.
THESE CRIMES...SO MANY OF THEM ARE HAPPENING BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF THIS TOWN ARE BEING LEFT WITH NOTHING. THESE AREN'T CRIMINALS.
THEY'RE JUST REGULAR PEOPLE WITH NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE. I FIGURED IF I STOP THEM, MAYBE THEY CAN ACTUALLY TURN THEIR LIVES AROUND...
SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
ARCHIE... YOUR HEART IS PURE.
I JUST WANT YOU TO BE HONEST WITH ME.
DON'T WORRY--
--WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT, OKAY?

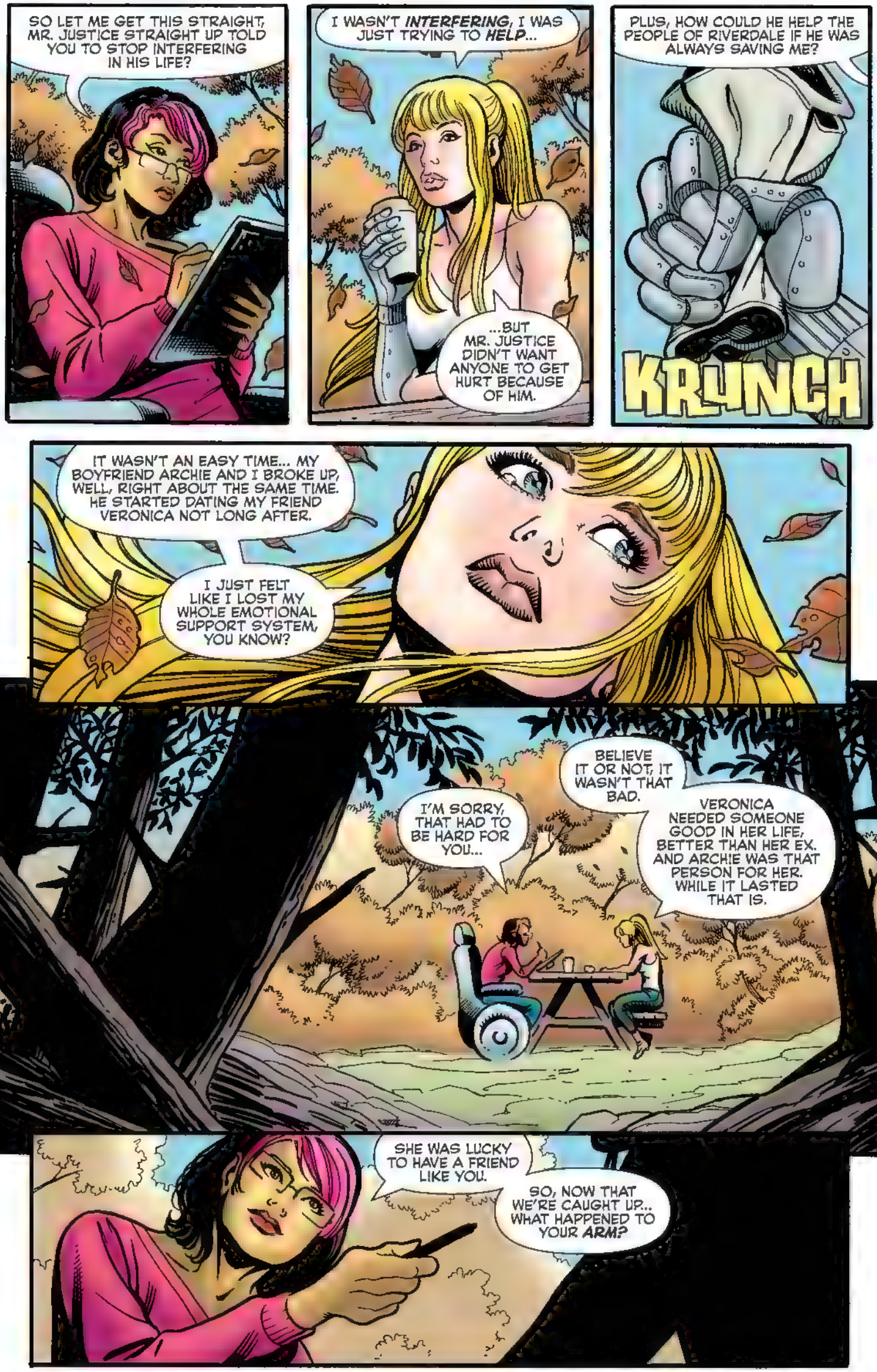
AFTER THAT, I WAS ALWAYS ONE STEP BEHIND MR. JUSTICE. SOMETHING ABOUT HIM MADE WE WANT TO BE A BETTER PERSON... A BRAVER PERSON.
LODGE
IT DIDN'T HAPPEN RIGHT AWAY... TRUST ME.
BUT AFTER A WHILE, MR. JUSTICE INSPIRED ME TO BE BRAVE.
AND IF HE COULD HELP ME DO THAT, THEN I COULD HELP HIM SAVE RIVERDALE. SO, WHEREVER MR. JUSTICE NEEDED SUPPORT, I WAS THERE.
YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER, AT THIS POINT, A LOT OF THE THINGS HIRAM LODGE WAS GETTING UP TO WEREN'T PROVEN YET... SOME MIGHT NEVER BE.
I THOUGHT THE BEST WAY I COULD HELP WAS TO TRY AND UNCOVER ALL OF IT.
WELL THEN, BETTY, I HAVE TO ASK--

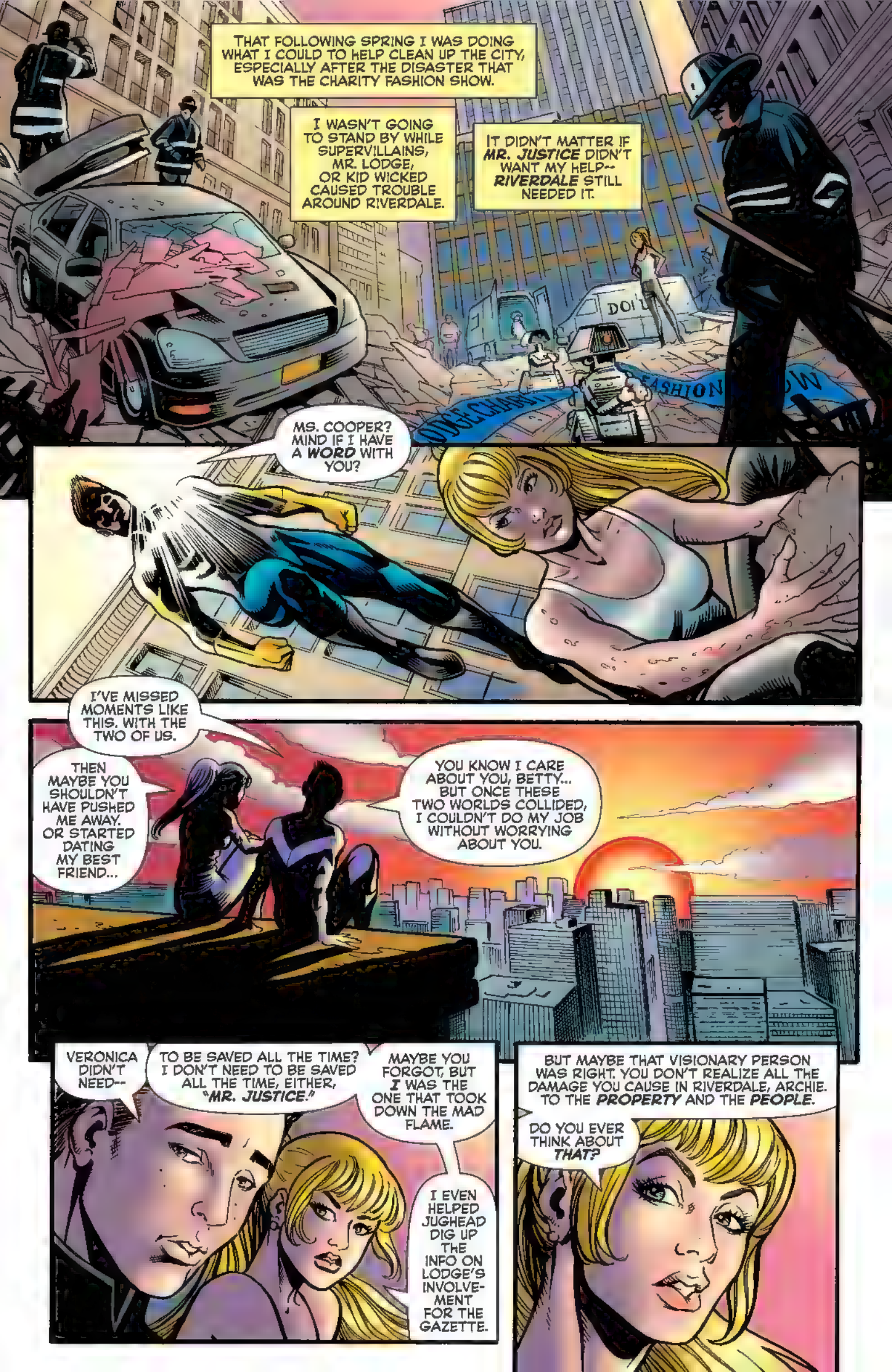
--HOW DID THIS AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MR. JUSTICE? OR YOUR BOYFRIEND FOR THAT MATTER?
I HAVE TO IMAGINE MR. ANDREWS WASN'T TOO HAPPY ABOUT YOU FOLLOWING ANOTHER MAN AROUND RIVERDALE.
I WAS ABLE TO KEEP THOSE PARTS OF MY LIFE... SEPARATE. I HAD TO...
I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT ARCHIE UNDERSTOOD. IT WAS REALLY MR. JUSTICE THAT HAD A PROBLEM WITH ME FOLLOWING HIM AROUND.
IT WAS CHRISTMAS TIME WHEN EVERYTHING CAME TO A HEAD.
MY BOYFRIEND AND I WERE DOING FINE...BUT THAT WAS IT--THINGS WERE JUST FINE.
ARE YOU OKAY? YOU'VE BARELY SAID ANYTHING ALL NIGHT.
I'M FINE...I'VE JUST BEEN THINKING ABOUT MR. JUSTICE...ABOUT US...AND MAYBE IT'S TIME WE--
FROOOOSH

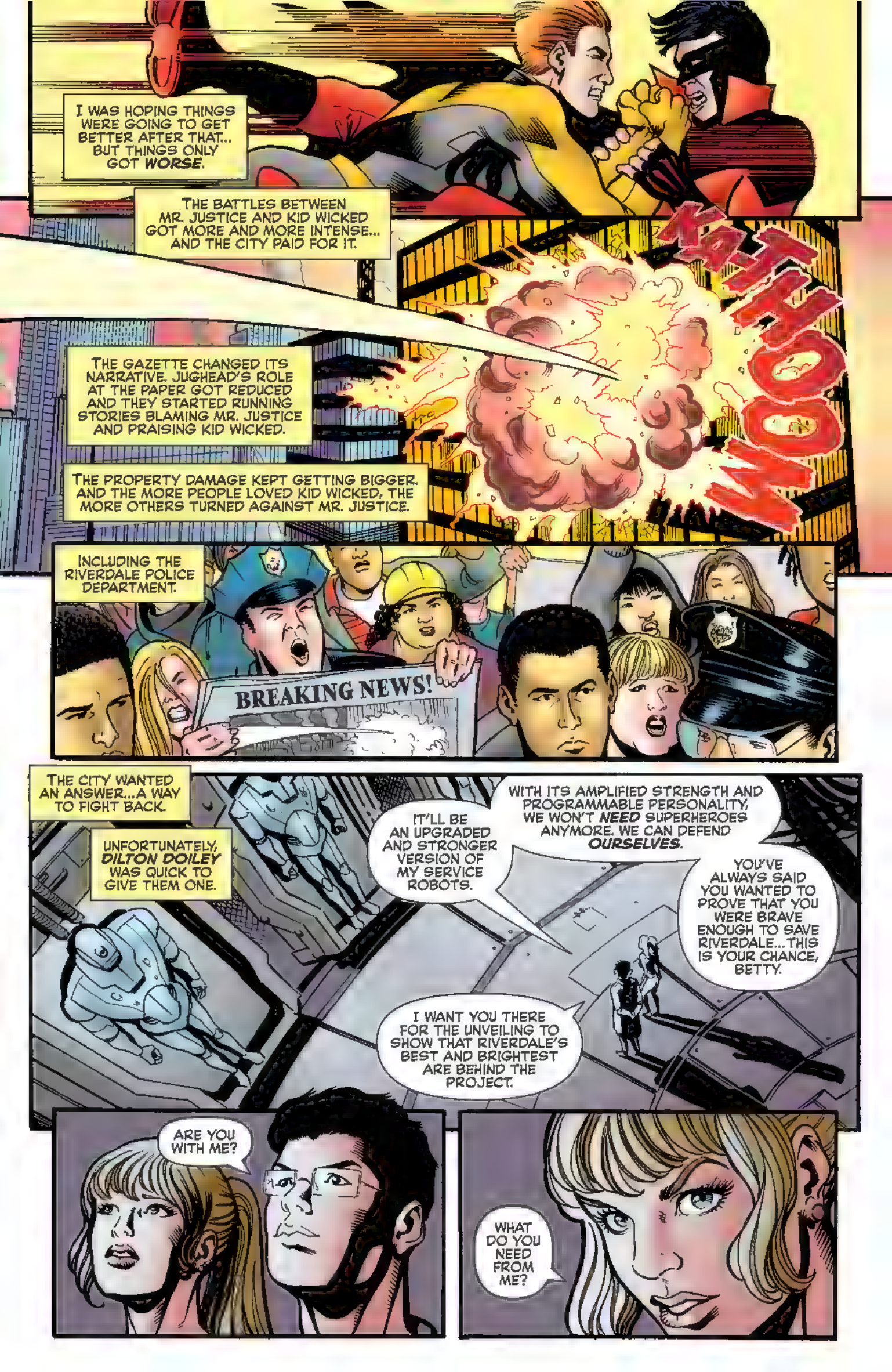
WE NEVER GOT TO FINISH THAT CONVERSATION.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS! YOU'RE BETTY COOPER, RIGHT?
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT MR. JUSTICE IS ALWAYS RESCUING IN THE NEWS.
MAYBE YOU CAN DO ME A FAVOR? SCREAM REALLY LOUD SO I CAN HAVE A WORD WITH HIM!
YOU GO HIDE. I'LL DRAW HIS FIRE, THEN PULL A WARDROBE CHANGE.
BUT I CAN HELP! YOU CAN'T DO ALL OF THIS YOURSELF!
WE FOUND OUT LATER THAT THE MAD FLAME WAS ANOTHER VICTIM OF HIRAM LODGE'S CORPORATE GREED.
THE LODGE CORPORATION MUTATED THE POOR MAN TO TRY TO BURN AWAY POLLUTION.
HIRAM TOLD DILTON THAT IT WAS TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO REDUCE LANDFILL AND DILTON BELIEVED HIM--
--BUT I THINK LODGE ALWAYS JUST SAW THE OPPORTUNITY TO TURN HIM INTO A WEAPON AGAINST MR. JUSTICE.
OF COURSE, NO ONE CAN REALLY CONTROL A WILDFIRE. BUT IF ANYONE WAS GOING TO TRY--
FROOSH

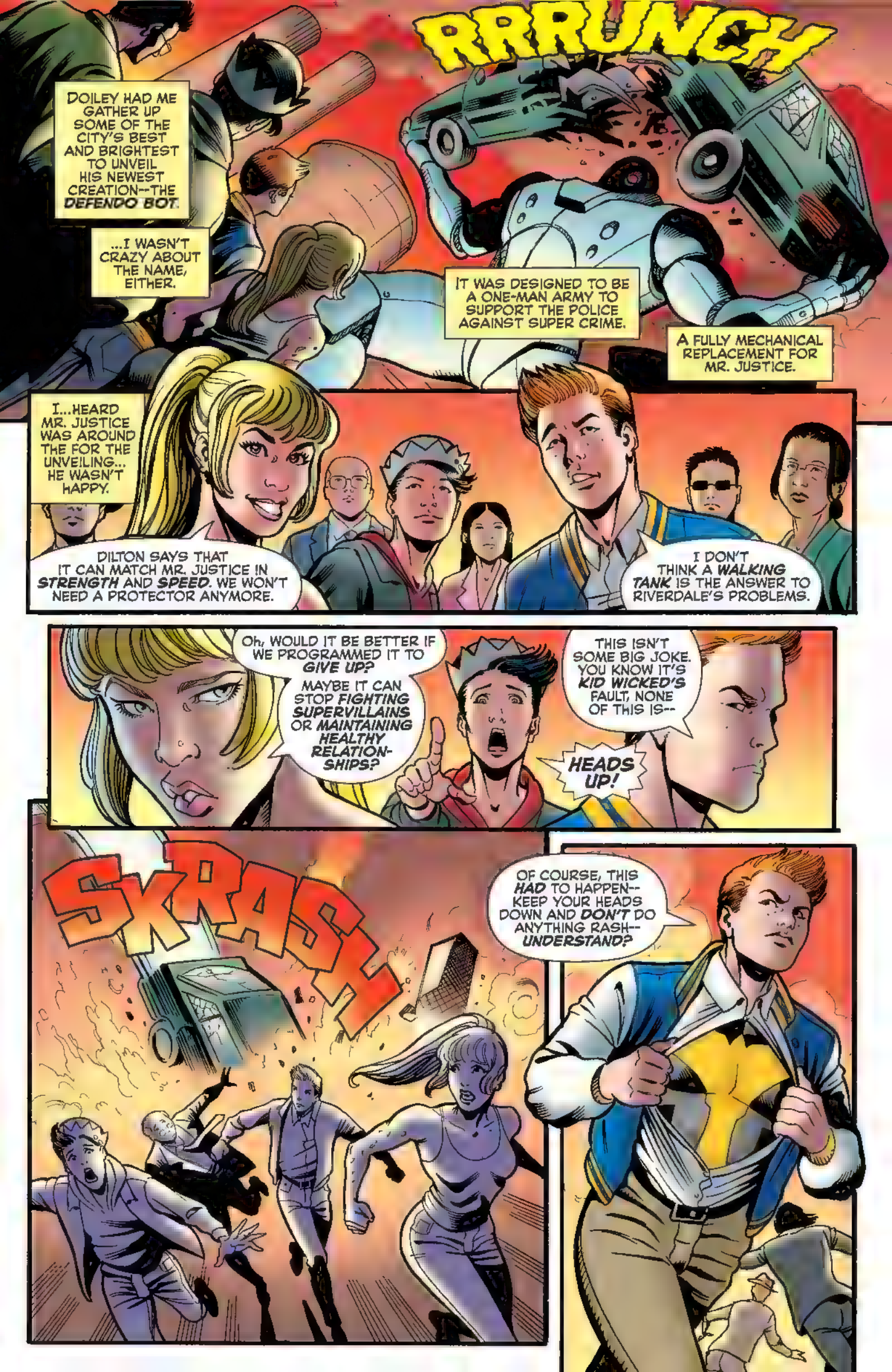

--IT WAS MR. JUSTICE.
YOUR POWERS ARE OUT OF CONTROL-- LET ME HELP YOU!
HELP ME? HOW ABOUT I LIGHT A FIRE UNDER YOU!
THEY TOLD ME THE ONLY WAY I'M GETTING BACK TO NORMAL IS IF I TAKE YOU OFF THE BOARD---SO CONSIDER YOURSELF TOAST!
I TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT I HAD BEEN FRIGHTENED AS A KID.
BUT SITTING THERE, WATCHING MR. JUSTICE GET BURNED... I COULDN'T SIT BY AND DO NOTHING.
SO, I TRIED TO SWALLOW MY FEAR AND PUT YEARS OF WEEKEND HORSEBACK RIDING AND WRANGLING TO GOOD USE.
HYUK!!
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A FIGHT, MAD FLAME--

--YOU FOUND ONE!
BETTY, WAIT!
HIS POWERS ARE TOO UNSTABLE! THE CHEMICALS CREATING THE FLAMES ARE LIKE A GREASE FIRE, WATER WILL MAKE IT EXPLODE--
BA-FRROOOOOMM
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE--THE DAMAGE WAS ALREADY DONE.
THE EXPLOSION SENT A BALL OF FIRE AND BOILING WATER EVERYWHERE-- AND I WAS CAUGHT UP IN IT.
I TOLD YOU TO GO AND HIDE... I ALWAYS TELL YOU BUT YOU NEVER LISTEN. WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN I CAN'T SAVE YOU?
BUT I'M FINE. LOOK-- MOST OF IT JUST HIT MY WINTER COAT. WE'RE BOTH OKAY.
NO, BETTY...WE'RE NOT OKAY. IN FACT, I'VE BEEN THINKING... FOR YOUR SAFETY--
--I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD SEE EACH OTHER ANYMORE. OKAY?
I'VE GOT A TARGET ON MY BACK, AND YOU'RE ONLY GOING TO GET HURT IF YOU'RE AROUND ME. PLEASE?


SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, MR. JUSTICE STRAIGHT UP TOLD YOU TO STOP INTERFERING IN HIS LIFE?
I WASN'T *INTERFERING*, I WAS JUST TRYING TO *HELP*...
...BUT MR. JUSTICE DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO GET HURT BECAUSE OF HIM.
PLUS, HOW COULD HE HELP THE PEOPLE OF RIVERDALE IF HE WAS ALWAYS SAVING ME?
KRUNCH
IT WASN'T AN EASY TIME... MY BOYFRIEND ARCHIE AND I BROKE UP, WELL, RIGHT ABOUT THE SAME TIME. HE STARTED DATING MY FRIEND VERONICA NOT LONG AFTER.
I JUST FELT LIKE I LOST MY WHOLE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM, YOU KNOW?
I'M SORRY, THAT HAD TO BE HARD FOR YOU...
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT WASN'T THAT BAD.
VERONICA NEEDED SOMEONE GOOD IN HER LIFE, BETTER THAN HER EX. AND ARCHIE WAS THAT PERSON FOR HER. WHILE IT LASTED THAT IS.
SHE WAS LUCKY TO HAVE A FRIEND LIKE YOU.
SO, NOW THAT WE'RE CAUGHT UP... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR *ARM*?

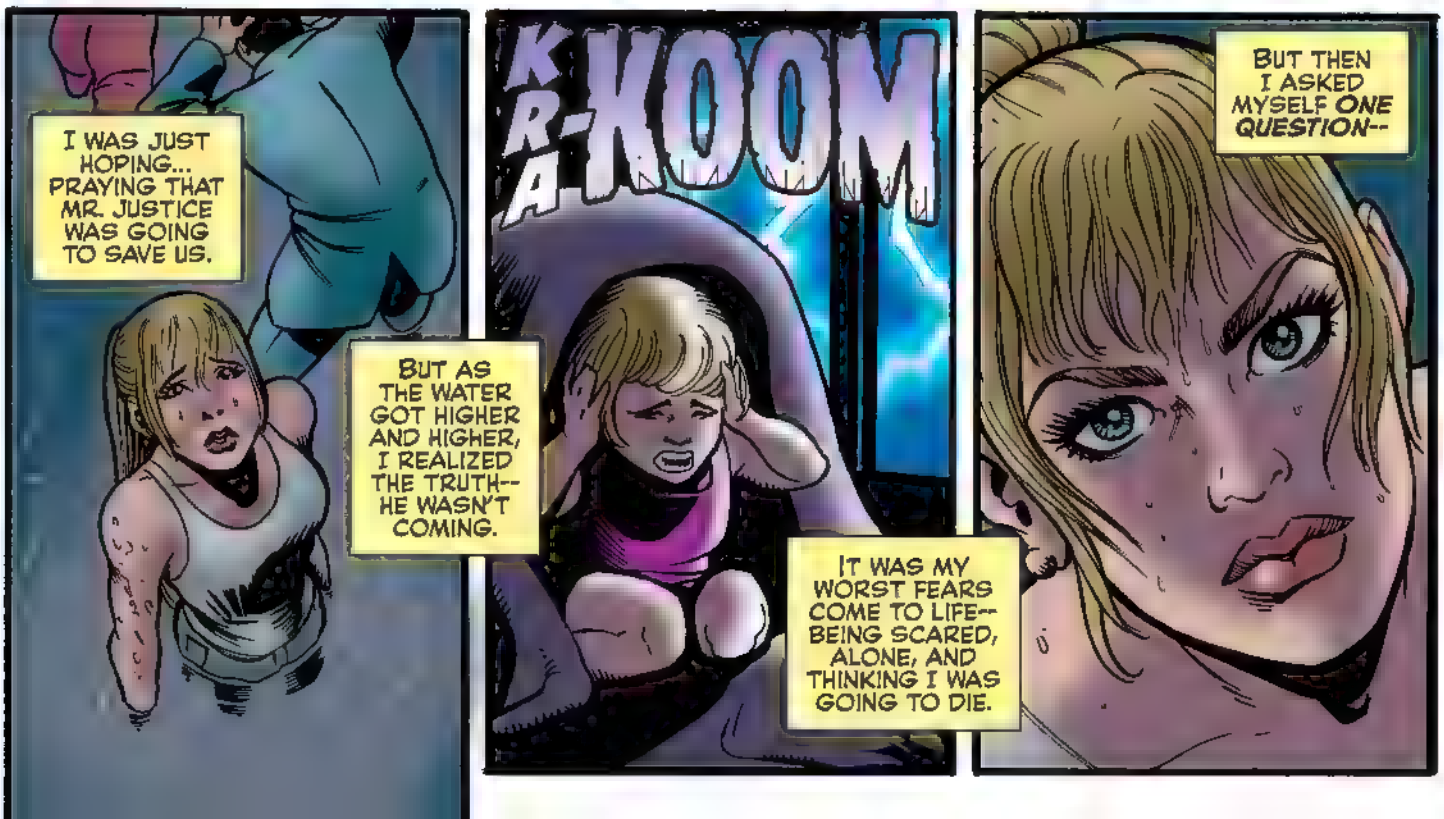

THAT FOLLOWING SPRING I WAS DOING WHAT I COULD TO HELP CLEAN UP THE CITY, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE DISASTER THAT WAS THE CHARITY FASHION SHOW.
I WASN'T GOING TO STAND BY WHILE SUPERVILLAINS, MR. LODGE, OR KID WICKED CAUSED TROUBLE AROUND RIVERDALE.
IT DIDN'T MATTER IF MR. JUSTICE DIDN'T WANT MY HELP-- RIVERDALE STILL NEEDED IT.
MS. COOPER? MIND IF I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?
I'VE MISSED MOMENTS LIKE THIS. WITH THE TWO OF US.
THEN MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE PUSHED ME AWAY. OR STARTED DATING MY BEST FRIEND...
YOU KNOW I CARE ABOUT YOU, BETTY... BUT ONCE THESE TWO WORLDS COLLIDED, I COULDN'T DO MY JOB WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT YOU.
VERONICA DIDN'T NEED--
TO BE SAVED ALL THE TIME? I DON'T NEED TO BE SAVED ALL THE TIME, EITHER, "MR. JUSTICE."
MAYBE YOU FORGOT, BUT I WAS THE ONE THAT TOOK DOWN THE MAD FLAME.
I EVEN HELPED JUGHEAD DIG UP THE INFO ON LODGE'S INVOLVE-MENT FOR THE GAZETTE.
BUT MAYBE THAT VISIONARY PERSON WAS RIGHT. YOU DON'T REALIZE ALL THE DAMAGE YOU CAUSE IN RIVERDALE, ARCHIE. TO THE PROPERTY AND THE PEOPLE.
DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT THAT?


I WAS HOPING THINGS WERE GOING TO GET BETTER AFTER THAT... BUT THINGS ONLY GOT *WORSE*.
THE BATTLES BETWEEN MR. JUSTICE AND KID WICKED GOT MORE AND MORE INTENSE... AND THE CITY PAID FOR IT.
KAPOW
THE GAZETTE CHANGED ITS NARRATIVE. JUGHEAD'S ROLE AT THE PAPER GOT REDUCED AND THEY STARTED RUNNING STORIES BLAMING MR. JUSTICE AND PRAISING KID WICKED.
THE PROPERTY DAMAGE KEPT GETTING BIGGER. AND THE MORE PEOPLE LOVED KID WICKED, THE MORE OTHERS TURNED AGAINST MR. JUSTICE.
INCLUDING THE RIVERDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT.
BREAKING NEWS!
THE CITY WANTED AN ANSWER...A WAY TO FIGHT BACK.
UNFORTUNATELY, *DILTON DOILEY* WAS QUICK TO GIVE THEM ONE.
IT'LL BE AN UPGRADED AND STRONGER VERSION OF MY SERVICE ROBOTS.
WITH ITS AMPLIFIED STRENGTH AND PROGRAMMABLE PERSONALITY, WE WON'T *NEED* SUPERHEROES ANYMORE. WE CAN DEFEND *OURSELVES*.
YOU'VE ALWAYS SAID YOU WANTED TO PROVE THAT YOU WERE BRAVE ENOUGH TO SAVE RIVERDALE... THIS IS YOUR CHANCE, BETTY.
I WANT YOU THERE FOR THE UNVEILING TO SHOW THAT RIVERDALE'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST ARE BEHIND THE PROJECT.
ARE YOU WITH ME?
WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM ME?


RRRUNCH
DOILEY HAD ME GATHER UP SOME OF THE CITY'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST TO UNVEIL HIS NEWEST CREATION--THE DEFENDO BOT.
...I WASN'T CRAZY ABOUT THE NAME, EITHER.
IT WAS DESIGNED TO BE A ONE-MAN ARMY TO SUPPORT THE POLICE AGAINST SUPER CRIME.
A FULLY MECHANICAL REPLACEMENT FOR MR. JUSTICE.
I...HEARD MR. JUSTICE WAS AROUND THE FOR THE UNVEILING... HE WASN'T HAPPY.
DILTON SAYS THAT IT CAN MATCH MR. JUSTICE IN STRENGTH AND SPEED. WE WON'T NEED A PROTECTOR ANYMORE.
I DON'T THINK A WALKING TANK IS THE ANSWER TO RIVERDALE'S PROBLEMS.
Oh, WOULD IT BE BETTER IF WE PROGRAMMED IT TO GIVE UP?
MAYBE IT CAN STOP FIGHTING SUPERVILLAINS OR MAINTAINING HEALTHY RELATION-SHIPS?
THIS ISN'T SOME BIG JOKE. YOU KNOW IT'S KID WICKED'S FAULT, NONE OF THIS IS--
HEADS UP!
SKRASH
OF COURSE, THIS HAD TO HAPPEN-- KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN AND DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH-- UNDERSTAND?

DILTON WAS RIGHT. THE THING WAS DESIGNED TO KEEP UP WITH MR. JUSTICE BLOW FOR BLOW.
GREAT FOR INVESTORS, BUT BAD FOR RIVERDALE.
I DON'T KNOW IF DILTON MISPLACED A ONE OR A ZERO IN THE PROGRAMMING OR IF HIRAM LODGE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT...WE NEVER FOUND OUT.
ALL I CARED ABOUT IN THAT MOMENT WAS GETTING PEOPLE TO SAFETY.
EVERYONE INTO THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT--THERE ARE SECURE BUNKERS WE BUILT ALL AROUND THE CITY FOR SITUATIONS JUST LIKE THIS!
OKAY, EVERYONE, JUST STAY CALM.
WE PUT THESE IN PLACE TO AID WITH THE RIVERDALE IMPROVEMENT EFFORT. THEY'RE DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND DAMAGE--
SKROOM
THE PROBLEM WAS, THEY WERE DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND THE *VILLAINS*--NOT SOMETHING THAT COULD GO *TOE-TO-TOE* WITH *MR. JUSTICE*.
IT LACKED *EMPATHY*. IT DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE *HUMAN* ELEMENT, IT ONLY HAD THE ABILITY TO FIGHT.
AND I HAD LED THOSE POOR PEOPLE INTO A *WATERY GRAVE*.
OH, NO...

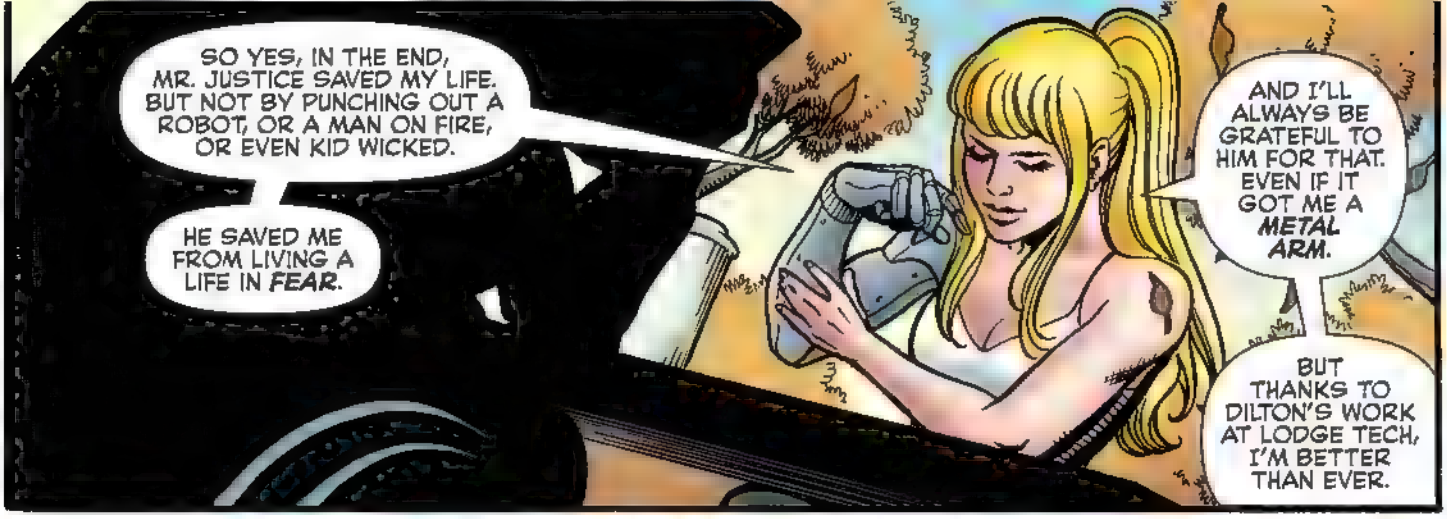
KRAKK
WOULD YOU LOOK AT *THAT?* RIVERDALE BUILDS YOU A REPLACEMENT AND YOU USE IT TO DESTROY THE WHOLE CITY.
BRAM
THOOM
THE TRUTH IS FINALLY GONNA COME OUT ABOUT YOU BEING A LOSER! I *ALWAYS* KNEW, BUT NOW EVERYONE'S GONNA KNOW!
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, KID WICKED?!
YOU *STILL* DON'T KNOW WHO I AM? YOU REALLY ARE WRAPPED UP IN YOURSELF, AREN'T YOU, *ANDREWS?*
R-REGGIE?


I WAS JUST HOPING... PRAYING THAT MR. JUSTICE WAS GOING TO SAVE US.
BUT AS THE WATER GOT HIGHER AND HIGHER, I REALIZED THE TRUTH-- HE WASN'T COMING.
KRA-KOOM
IT WAS MY WORST FEARS COME TO LIFE-- BEING SCARED, ALONE, AND THINKING I WAS GOING TO DIE.
BUT THEN I ASKED MYSELF *ONE QUESTION--*

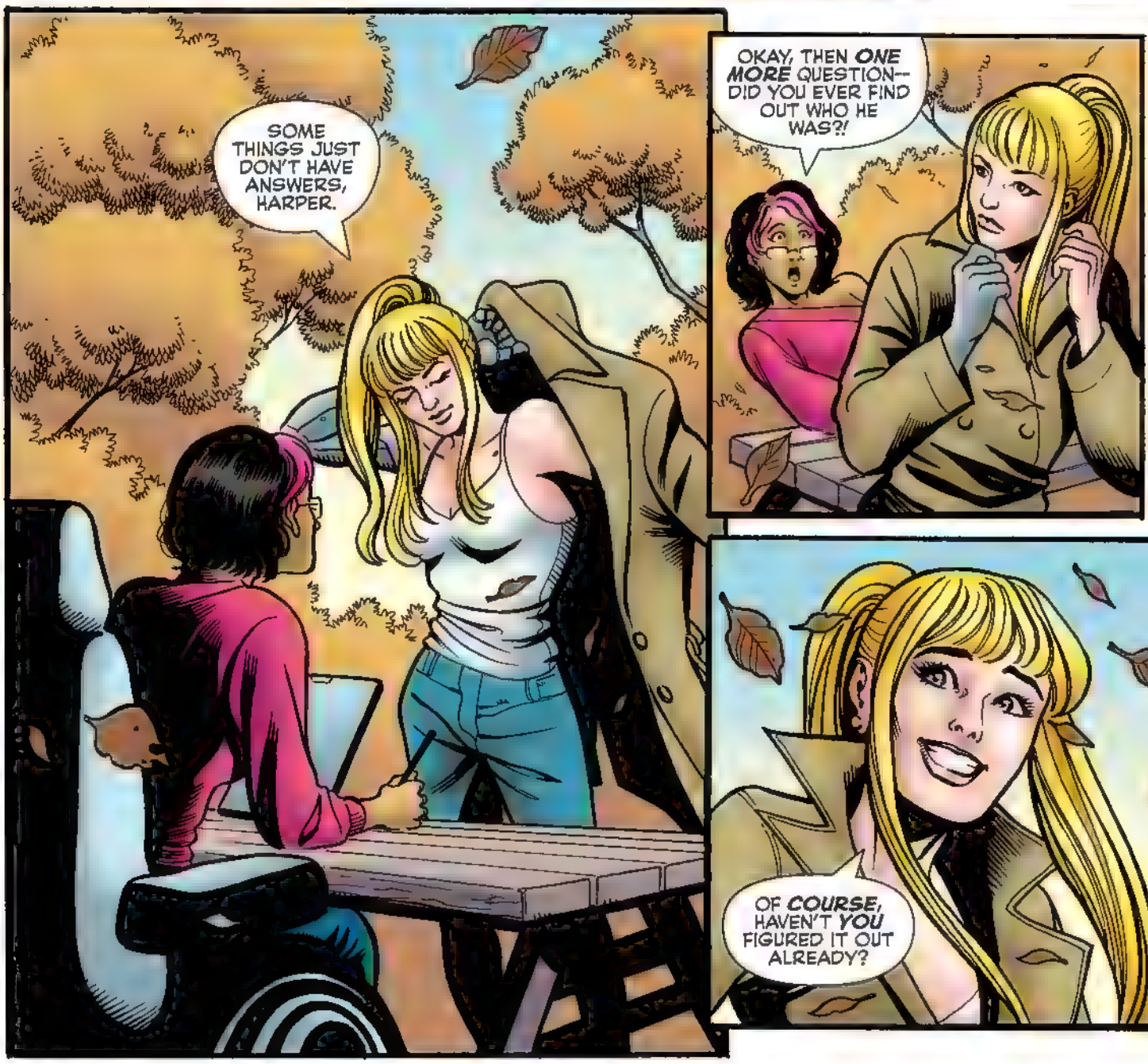
--WHAT WOULD MR. JUSTICE DO?
BETTER YET-- WHAT IS BETTY COOPER GOING TO DO?
GRAAAHHH!!
HURRY-- EVERYONE RUN! I CAN'T HOLD IT FOR LONG!
SNAP
AAHHH!!
THOOM

THWAKK
KRA-KOOM
MR. JUSTICE, YOU HAVE TO HELP-- IT'S MS. COOPER, SHE'S TRAPPED!
NO, NO, NO, NO... COME ON, BETTY...
I SPENT YEARS OF MY LIFE BEING AFRAID. BUT STUCK UNDER ALL THAT DEBRIS, AFTER HELPING ALL THOSE PEOPLE, I FINALLY REALIZED SOMETHING.
I SHOULD'VE BEEN THE MOST TERRIFIED I HAD BEEN IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.
I WAS SURROUNDED BY STONE, STEEL, AND WATER...BUT I WASN'T SCARED. AND DO YOU KNOW WHY?

BECAUSE I WAS HELPING PEOPLE. AND WHEN YOU CAN BE BRAVE FOR OTHERS, YOU CAN LEARN TO BE FEARLESS.
KOFF
WH-WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
Oh, BETTY... BETTY I'M SO SORRY. I SHOULD'VE NEVER PUSHED YOU AWAY. YOU WERE RIGHT.
Oh, I KNOW I WAS RIGHT.
ALTHOUGH THE BIG HERO STILL HAD TO SWOOP IN AND RESCUE ME, HUH?
YOU'RE A BIGGER HERO THAN I EVER COULD BE, BETTY. I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF I AM ONE ANYMORE...
THE THREAT TO RIVERDALE WASN'T MY RELATIONSHIPS... IT NEVER HAS BEEN.
IF I PUT HALF AS MUCH TIME STOPPING KID WICKED AS I DID PUSHING YOU AWAY, WE WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MESS.
I'VE MADE THIS ALL ABOUT HIM. AND I THINK I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND WHY...


SO YES, IN THE END, MR. JUSTICE SAVED MY LIFE. BUT NOT BY PUNCHING OUT A ROBOT, OR A MAN ON FIRE, OR EVEN KID WICKED.
HE SAVED ME FROM LIVING A LIFE IN *FEAR*.
AND I'LL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL TO HIM FOR THAT. EVEN IF IT GOT ME A *METAL ARM*.
BUT THANKS TO DILTON'S WORK AT LODGE TECH, I'M BETTER THAN EVER.

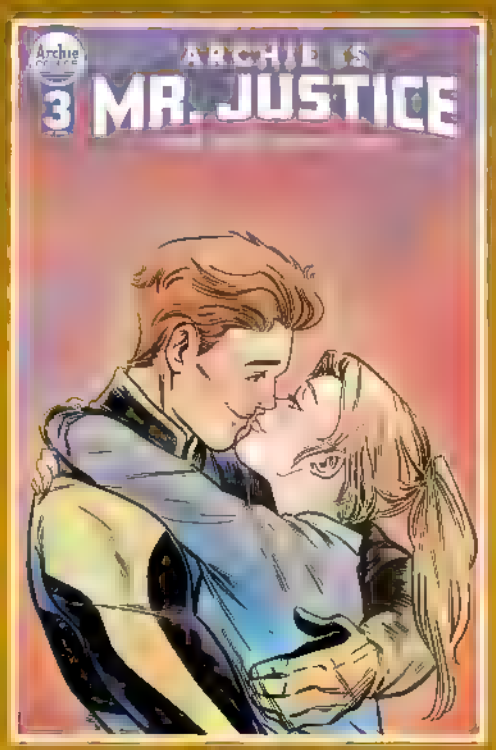
WE CAN ALL BE THANKFUL FOR THAT.
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SHARING YOUR STORY WITH ME, MS. COOPER.
BUT THE QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S MIND RIGHT NOW IS STILL THE *BIG ONE*-- *WHERE* IS MR. JUSTICE?


SOME THINGS JUST DON'T HAVE ANSWERS, HARPER.
OKAY, THEN *ONE MORE* QUESTION-- DID YOU EVER FIND OUT WHO HE WAS?!
OF *COURSE*, HAVEN'T *YOU* FIGURED IT OUT ALREADY?

MR. JUSTICE IS RIVERDALE.
HE'S THE SPIRIT OF THIS CITY SHAPED INTO A PERSON MEANT TO INSPIRE US--
--AND TO MAKE US FEARLESS.
NEXT: REGGIE

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE COVER GALLERY

REIKO MURAKAMI



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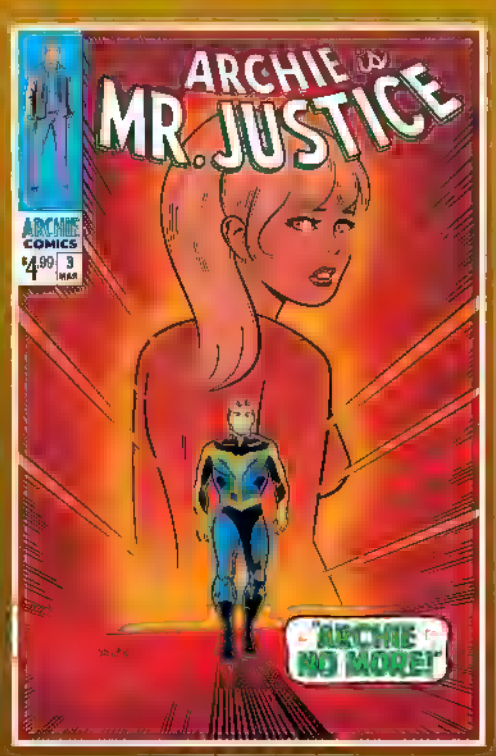


MATT TALBOT

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE

BET ON BETTY

A "behind the scenes" look at Archie is Mr. Justice #3

We should all be more like Betty.

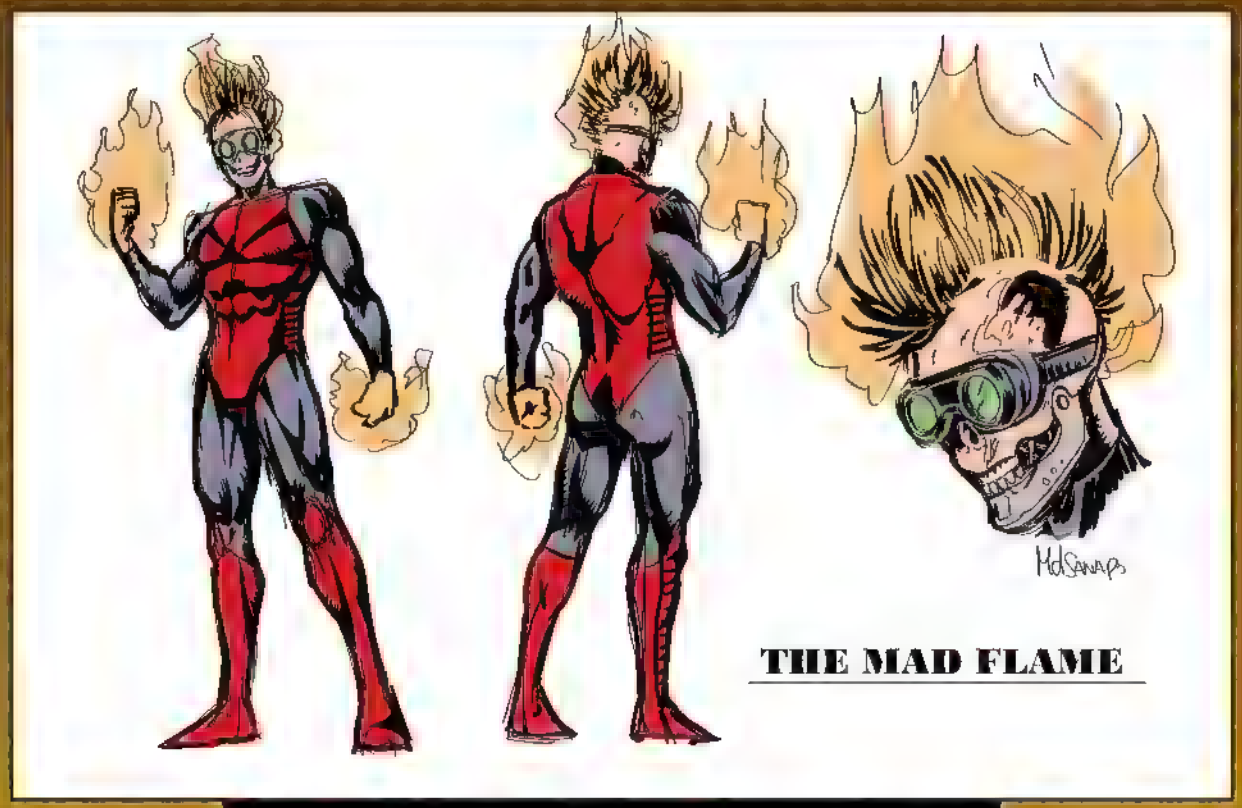
Though, to be fair, I think that's a fair takeaway from all—okay, most—Archie comics. Betty is forever our girl next door, helping others, putting her best foot forward, always trying to do the right thing. But here, we see a new side of Betty—one that wants to do good, but is tired of living in others' shadows and feeling helpless.

Historically, Betty too has had a superhero alias—Superteen (in my opinion, she never got enough credit for being the namesake of the teenage superheroes super group). As Superteen, Betty has the powers of flight, resilience, and superstrength, and can access these powers with a twist of her magic ponytail. Her powers are often used to uplift the rest of her super-powered team of teens.

In this version of Riverdale, while she often still sports her ponytail, there's no magic twist that makes Betty a hero—instead, it's her sheer will to fight and uplift others. Betty is the truest hero of all—because she's not a superhero, just someone who's been inspired to do all she can to make the world a better place. And Mr. Justice being a big part of that inspiration just further establishes his importance—it's more than mecha robot battles and superhero punchouts in the sky—it's the influence he's had on those around him, the will he's given them to take up the good fight and find power within themselves to reject authoritarian evildoings and work to better their communities.

I had been eager to work with writer Kenny Porter for some time, and thoroughly enjoyed his run on *Superboy: The Man of Tomorrow* (man, that guy knows how to write young superheroes!). Kenny not only has an impeccable ability to write heroes, he also has a knack for writing complex relationship dynamics. In this issue, he guides us through the timeline of Betty and Archie's friendship-turned-relationship and eventual breakup, Betty's kinship with Mr. Justice (being one of the few people who know it's Archie), her own complicated sense of self in the shadows of both Archie/Mr. Justice and Veronica/Visionary, her view of Mr. Justice despite the barrage of negative propaganda surrounding him, and—finally—her own confidence and how it relates to what she's learned from Mr. Justice. Action-packed

Page 9 page layout by Maria Sanapo.



The Mad Flame character concept by Maria Sanapo.

superhero stories are always a blast, but it's these human moments that really make a story sing, and Kenny nailed it.

We love working with the amazing artist Maria L. Sanapo. We've been fortunate enough to have her contribute some beautiful covers to past superhero comics (if you haven't seen her covers for the *Darkling* and *Jaguar* one-shots, please do yourself a favor and remedy that immediately), and finally giving her the space to breathe and chance to shine with a full story has been incredibly rewarding to us—and we imagine the same for all readers, as well.

As usual, Glenn Whitmore's colors and Jack Morelli's letters round out this gorgeous story and bring it to a whole new level. They're true heroes, through and through.

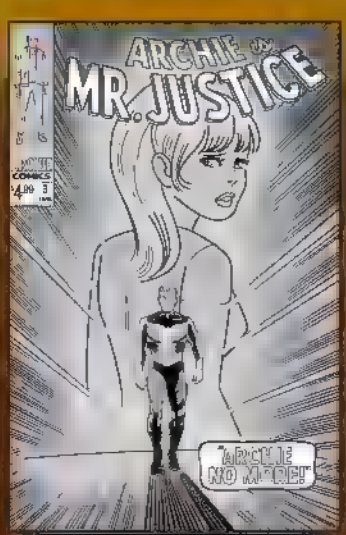
All that plus three more gorgeous covers, this time from Reiko Murakami, Soo Lee and an *Amazing Spider-Man* #50 homage from Matt Talbot!

Come back in May for our heart wrenching and action-packed conclusion — this time from the first person account of Mr. Justice/Archie's nemesis Reggie Mantle, aka Kid Wicked, in *Archie vs. Mr. Justice* #4!

Jamie L. Rotante,
Editor

Main cover concept by Reiko Murakami.

Variant cover concept by Soo Lee.



Homage variant cover concept by Matt Talbot.

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE TEAM UP!

An interview with the writer and the artist of Archie is Mr. Justice #3—Kenny Porter and Maria Sanapo

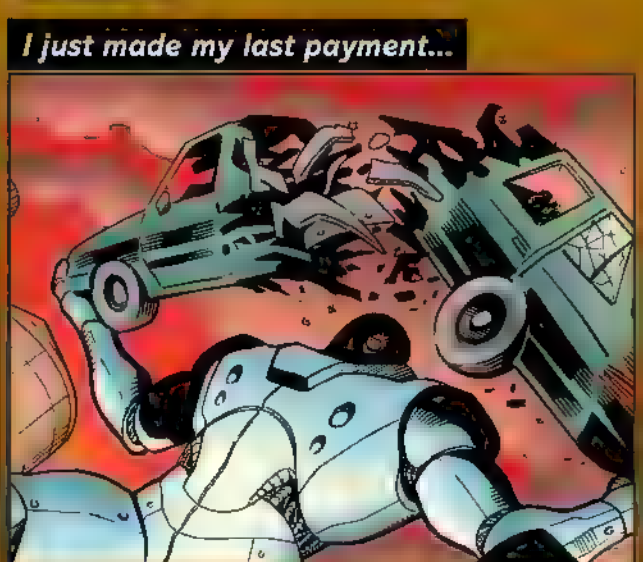
Kenny Porter

Maria Sanapo

What has it been like to explore Betty and Archie/Mr. Justice's relationship?

KENNY: It's been so much fun putting Betty and Archie's relationship through this new lens in a brand new Archie universe. While it plays on a lot of the similar themes and ideas in their traditional relationship, I was excited to explore Betty's drive and place in this world when it comes to living with a secret and trying to be a better person.

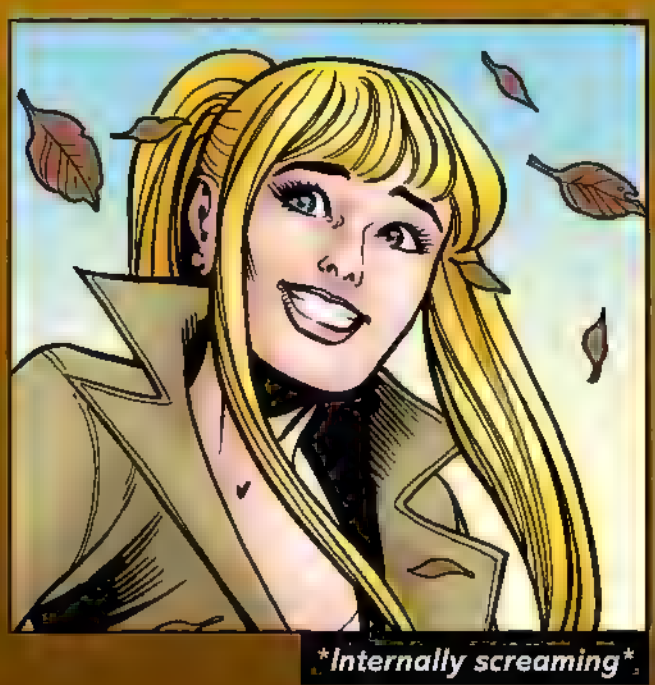
MARIA: I loved exploring Betty and Archie/Mr. Justice's relationship under a different light. We understand a lot more about their personality through their connection, and the will to help each other. Betty's commitment to keep Archie's secret and the contribution to his cause despite having no super powers of her own is admirable.



What's your favorite part of working on an Archie comic?

KENNY: My favorite part is getting to play with such iconic characters. I can't pinpoint when I first learned about Archie, Betty, Veronica, Jughead, and the rest of the Riverdale gang, but it feels like they've always been in my life. That might be because I would find and read Archie comics all the time, or we'd grab them at the grocery store, but however it happened, it feels like they've always been there. Getting to be a part of that world and these characters means so much to me, and I'm glad Maria and I got to work together on it.

MARIA: The part I like the most is portraying a great variety of characters, each one with a different personality. They are iconic but also extremely contemporary at the same time. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to draw them and to work on it with Kenny.



What's your best Archie memory?

KENNY: I actually have two that sort of reflect each other! My first is a very hazy but happy memory of reading an Archie collection by a pool one summer. I remember being young, still in elementary school, and enjoying a beautiful day while I read funny and heartfelt comics.

On the flip side, I remember reading *Afterlife with Archie* for the first time on a dark night at home and being absolutely blown away by the new take on the characters. It felt like rediscovering the characters again for the first time, and I absolutely loved it.

MARIA: My favorite Archie memory is about discovering Betty and Veronica for the first time. I immediately fell in love with them. You can't stop reading their adventures!

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE ISSUE THREE PLAYLIST

— SELECTED BY JAMIE LEE ROTANTE — & VINCENT LOVALLO

1. "Count on Me" Bruno Mars
2. "Fight Song" Rachel Platten
3. "Stronger" Kelly Clarkson
4. "Making Plans for Nigel" XTC
5. "Dance or Die" Janelle Monae
6. "Confident" Demi Lovato
7. "One Armed Scissor" At the Drive-In
8. "It's All Coming Back to Me Now" Celine Dion
9. "Second Chance" Shinedown
10. "Wonderwall" Oasis

— LISTEN ON SPOTIFY —
https://tinyurl.com/ArchieMJ3

WRITER BLAKE HOWARD AND ARTIST FEDERICO SABBATINI BRING ON THE BIG FINALE!
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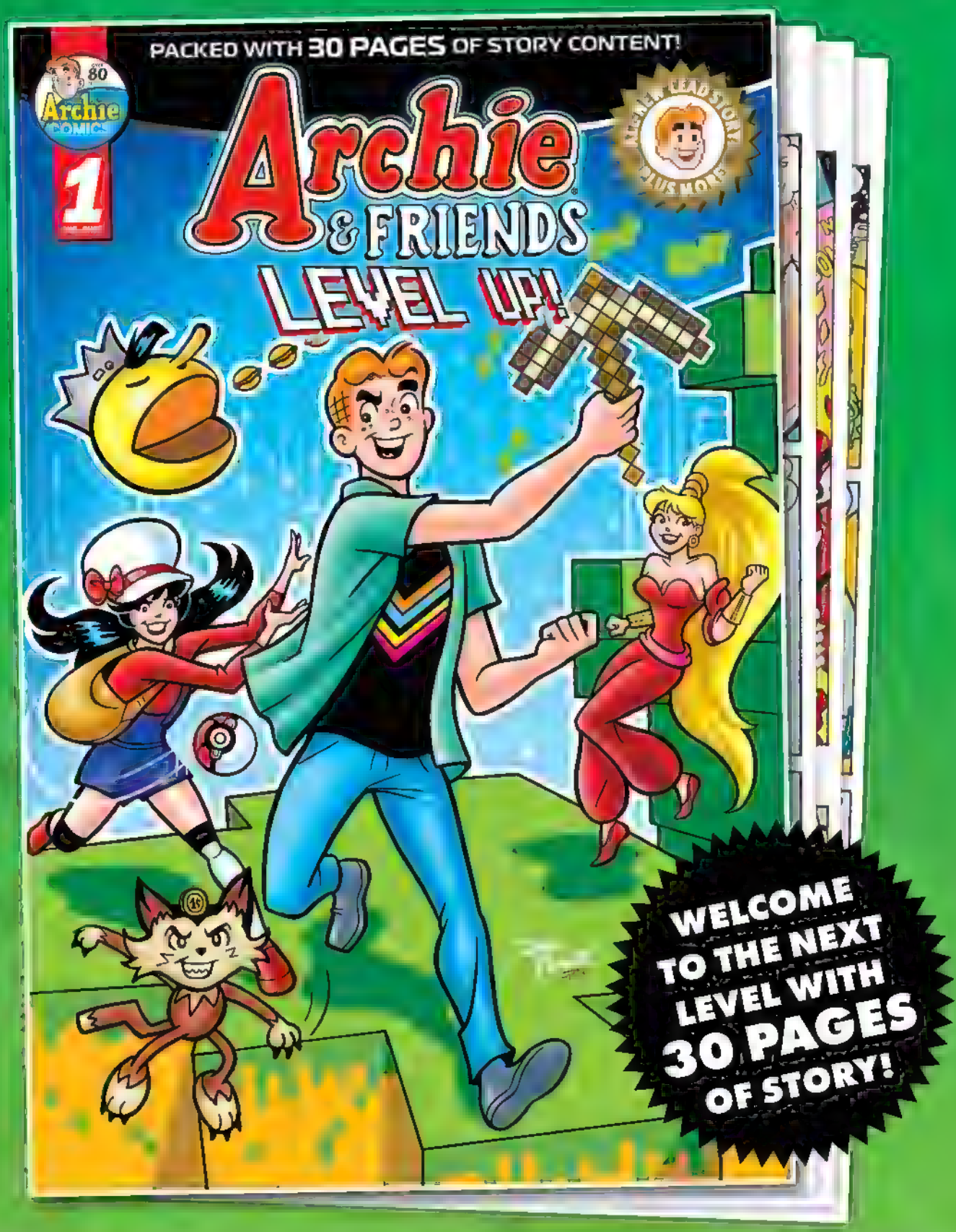

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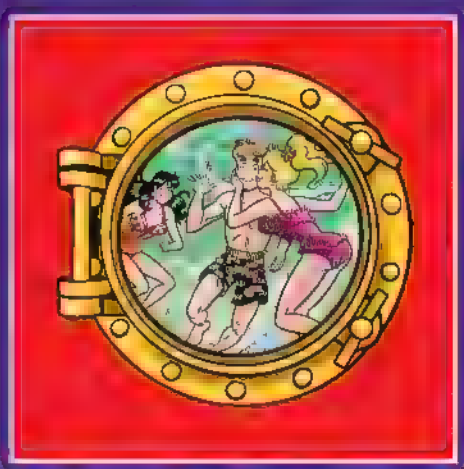

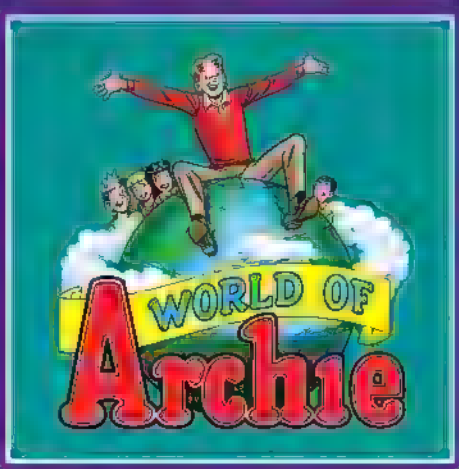

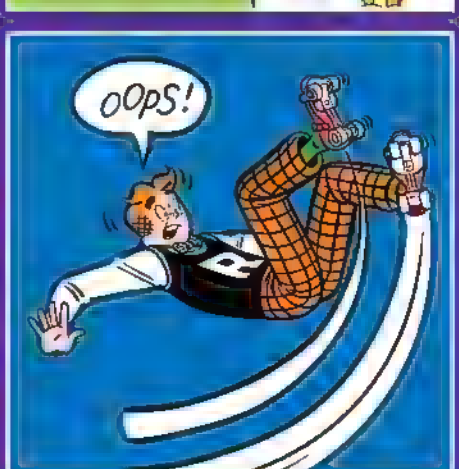

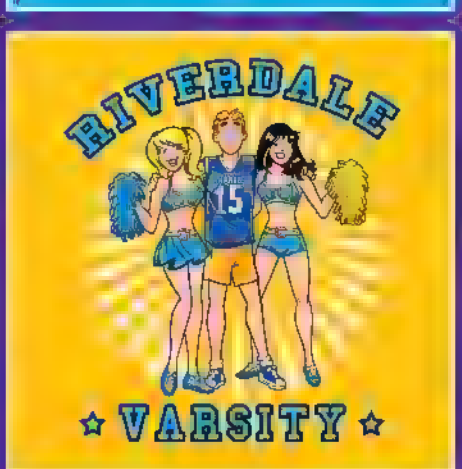

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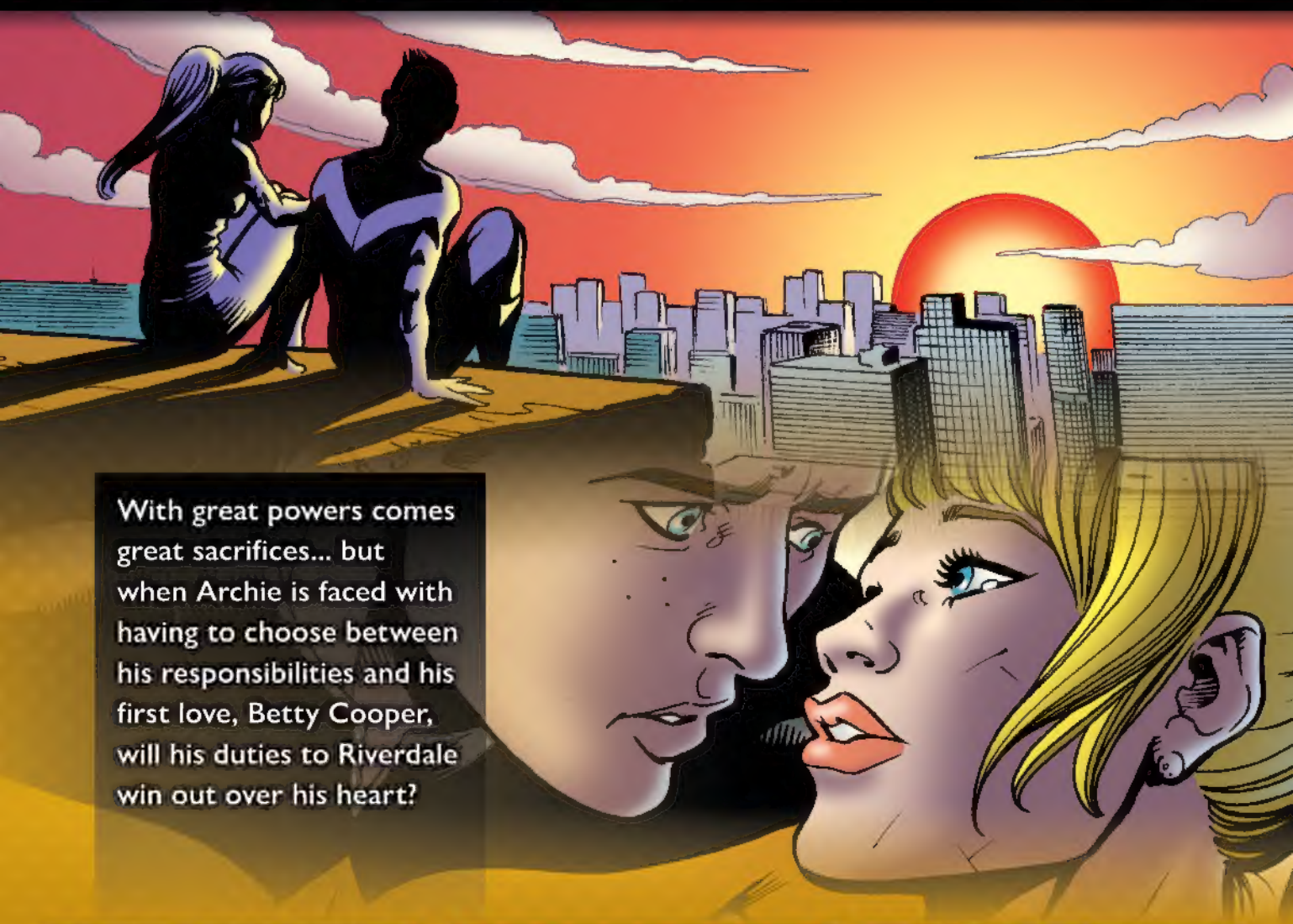
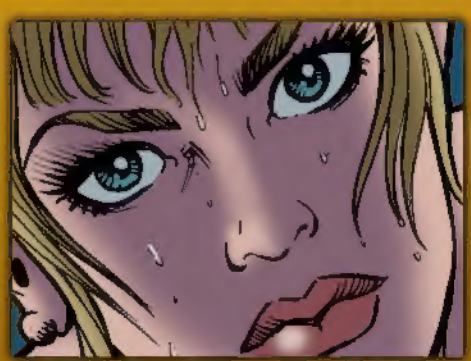


With great powers comes great sacrifices... but when Archie is faced with having to choose between his responsibilities and his first love, Betty Cooper, will his duties to Riverdale win out over his heart?



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